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ABSTRACT

This executive summary completes the three-volume set depicting the educational experiences of African Americans from preschool through adulthood. Like Volumes I and II, Volume III records the African American educational progress that has previously existed only in a multitude of places, including research and Census databases, at testing companies, and inside schools, colleges, and universities. Bringing these data together makes it possible to plan research agendas and make policy decisions based on recent and accurate data. Volume II concentrates on the transition from school to college and the subsequent transition from college to work. The data also make some conclusions about African American education possible. African Americans continue to be under-represented among those taking undergraduate admissions tests relative to their representation in the traditional college-age populations. They score below their white counterparts on admissions tests, in part because high school curricular choices appear to limit their success. The majority of African American undergraduate admissions test takers are female, a precursor to the gender gap in postsecondary educational enrollments and degree completions. Educational aspirations increased between 1980 and 1990 for both African Americans and Whites, but on-time high school completions were substantially lower for African Americans. In fact, African Americans are much less likely than Whites to attain the levels of education to which they had once aspired. A number of other findings complete the picture of African American education. (Contains 14 figures.) (SLD)

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THE

AFRICAN AMERICAN EDUCATION

DATA BOOK

Volume III: The Transition from School to College and School to Work

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
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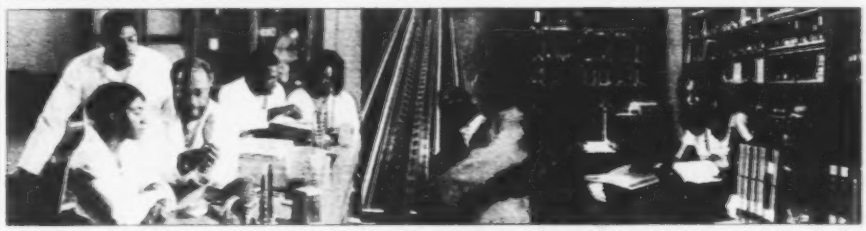
Executive Summary

FREDERICK D. PATTERSON RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF THE COLLEGE FUND/UNCF
A RESEARCH INSTITUTE ON AFRICAN AMERICANS AND EDUCATION

THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EDUCATION DATA BOOK



Volume III: The Transition from School to College and School to Work

Michael T. Nettles, Ph.D.
Executive Director

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Testimonials

"The policy rhetoric in this field careens wildly between myth and mysticism, rarely informed by the solid ground of reliable data and responsible evidence. Finally, we have access to carefully reviewed and organized statistical evidence regarding the conditions of education and employment for African American youth as they negotiate the perilous transitions from formal secondary education to postsecondary education and the many worlds of work. For those of us committed to the development of national and local policies that foster the development of all our nation's young people, the data presented in this volume are priceless. I commend the Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute, its scholars and administrative leaders, for providing us with this extraordinary body of work."

Lee S. Shulman
President
Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

"The multi-volume African American Education Data Book is the most comprehensive text available for understanding a broad range of complex educational issues impacting contemporary African Americans from K-12 through college. Volume III is a long overdue and first-of-its-kind analysis of a specific set of issues surrounding transitions from school to college and work on the part of African American youth. The Frederick Patterson Research Institute is now poised to establish a far-reaching action plan for the empowerment of African Americans in the educational arena for the 21st century. This work is critical to the prosperity of the group and the nation."

Beverly Guy-Sheftall
Director, Women's Research & Resource Center and
Anna J. Cooper Professor of Women's Studies
Spelman College

"The three-volume collection of data produced by the Patterson Research Institute provides an invaluably comprehensive and accessible resource for all who might need accurate, timely, and complete information on the education of African Americans. Since The Nation At Risk was released over a decade ago, effective school reform has been a constant pursuit. Yet, in order for school reform to be successfully implemented for African American students, the policymakers and programs developers must have knowledge of and, consequently, a better understanding of their total experiences. The African American Education Data Book makes this possible. After perusing this book, you will have an enlightened awareness of the statistics, an appreciation for how they impact society as a whole, and hopefully, a resolve to address the situation from your respective domains."

A. Wade Boykin
Professor and Graduate Program Director,
Department of Psychology
Director, Center for Research on the Education
of Students Placed At Risk (CRESPAR)
Howard University

Foreword

We are proud to present Volume III of the African American Education Data Book describing the transitions from school to college and from school to work. This volume completes the three-volume set depicting the educational experiences of African Americans from preschool through adulthood. Like Volumes I and II, Volume III records the African American educational progress that, heretofore, has existed in a multitude of places: as a part of research and census databases, inside testing companies, and inside schools, colleges, and universities. When the data and information about the education of African Americans are dispersed in such a way, the picture of the educational status and condition of African Americans is incomplete and inaccessible for analyses, research, and policymaking. The three-volume set retrieves and analyzes a vast amount of data about the educational representation, distribution, and achievement of African Americans. It relies upon the most reliable national cross-sectional and longitudinal data sources, sorts the data on students according to educational level, and presents comparisons based upon sex, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and type of schools attended.

At this stage in the history of the Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute, the data are largely descriptive, focusing exclusively upon presenting "just the facts." The explanations for the facts are reserved for future research. Here, Michael T. Nettles and the researchers at the Patterson Institute attempt to synthesize the educational experiences of African Americans in a way that will inform and serve as a powerful way of thinking about both the progress made and the challenges that we must confront. We hope this compilation of data will reveal information that has existed in isolation to allow for new research agenda setting, and to pave the way for improving educational opportunities and outcomes in the future.

We think it imperative that we produce the compelling facts that suggest direction and development for lay leaders, as well as for those in the business and education fields who are attempting to improve the nation's high schools, colleges, and universities. We invite policymakers, educators, legislators, media, and the public to examine the data and to set priorities and plan activities to address the many important and challenging issues that are revealed.

As a new Institute of The College Fund/UNCF, the mission of the Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute is to design, conduct, and disseminate research to policymakers, educators, the media, and the general public with the goal of improving educational opportunities and outcomes for African Americans. The research conducted by the Institute focuses upon the educational status and attainment of African Americans from preschool through adulthood.

William H. Gray, III
President and CEO
The College Fund/UNCF

Acknowledgments

The Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute has benefited from the support of some of the nation's leading corporate and philanthropic institutions and education organizations along with the most talented and committed professionals in producing this databook. To each one we are grateful. The Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute would like to extend its most heartfelt thanks to the following contributors: The Mott Foundation for contributing the initial funding that permitted The College Fund/UNCF to establish the Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute as a permanent endowment; The Pew Charitable Trusts, The W.K. Kellogg Foundations, and Lilly Endowment, Inc. for providing grants used to design, produce, and disseminate the report; Sun Microsystems for donating a powerful state of the art file server that permitted the Institute to store, process, and analyze large scale databases and retrieve data and information electronically over the Internet; The IBM Corporation for providing the best made personal compufers for the researchers at the Institute to use in analyzing data and writing the report; and both The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Incorporated (SPSS) and The Microsoft Corporation for the software products required to write the reports and present the data in tables and graphs. The Institute would also like to thank The Rockefeller Foundation for providing part of the support needed for staff leadership at the Institute; and The University of Michigan for contributing the time and part of the salary of the Executive Director of the Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute along with the expertise of its faculty in the areas of population research and large scale databases.

The time and proficiency of individuals are what transform valuable fiscal and material resources into valuable products. We are grateful to some of the nation's best talent for their involvement and support of this project including Michael Fields, Chairman of OpenVision, for his assistance in designing the technology strategy and securing contributions from major corporations; Lester Monts, Vice Provost for Academic and Multicultural Affairs at the University of Michigan for championing the University's personnel and financial contributions to the project; and the staff of the Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute: Laura Perna, Cherreka Montgomery, Heather Herbert, Flora West, and Michael Fraser for their tireless efforts in the production of this work.

Invaluable consultants to the project include: Mur Muchane from the University of Tennessee who served as a software specialist and leading technology strategist; Nancy Robertson, who assisted in analyzing and producing sections of the report; and Susan MacKenzie, who provided editorial assistance throughout the project. Others involved in various aspects of the project were: Shep Roey of the Westat Corporation; Paul Ramsey, Eleanor Horne, and Eugene Johnson of the Educational Testing Service; Susan Hill of the National Science Foundation; Reynolds Farley of the University of Michigan; and Tom Satterfiel and Jim Maxey of the American College Testing Company.

The data and information included in this report are among the best and most voluminous collection and reporting of educational statistics in a single document. In the course of obtaining a license to operate restricted data collected by government agencies, the Institute received the support and assistance of Alan Moorehead and Cynthia Barton of the U.S. Department of Education; and Mary Reynolds and Carolyn Shettle of the National Science Foundation. The data that were not received from these two agencies were either contributed by or purchased from The American College Testing Company, The Defense Manpower Data Center, The College Board, The Educational Testing Service, and The National Assessment Governing Board. To these organizations, we are extremely grateful for the rich data provided on assessments and other important indicators and for the generous overtures of technical assistance on matters ranging from interpreting data to reviewing draft documents.

The data and information in Volume III of the African American Education Data Book describe the transitions of African Americans from school to college and from school to employment. The information in Volume III provides a link between the status and progress of African Americans in higher education reported in Volume I and the performance and experiences of African Americans from preschool through high school reported in Volume II.

Volume III includes a broad range of indicators to describe the transitions from school to college and from school to employment including the following:

- trends in the number and share of African Americans taking undergraduate admissions tests;
- the performance of African Americans on undergraduate admissions tests relative to students of other racial/ethnic groups;
- changes in the types of schools attended by 1980 and 1990 high school sophomores;
- changes in the background characteristics of 1980 and 1990 high school sophomores;
- changes in high school completion rates between 1982 and 1992;
- the relationship between background characteristics and high school completion rates;
- postsecondary employment activities of 1980 and 1990 high school sophomores;
- postsecondary educational activities of 1980 and 1990 high school sophomores;
- factors related to educational attainment ten years after graduating from high school;
- earnings and unemployment rates; and
- educational attainment levels of military personnel.

The data and information presented in this volume represent the most comprehensive description ever compiled of the transitions of African Americans from school to college and from school to work.

CONCLUSIONS

The data and information in Volume III of the Data Book suggest the following conclusions:

- African Americans continue to be underrepresented among those taking undergraduate admissions tests relative to their representation in the traditional college-age population.
- African Americans score far below their White counterparts on undergraduate admissions tests even after controlling for such factors as family income and parental levels of education.
- High school curricular choices appear to limit the success of African Americans on some standardized tests. African American SAT test-takers have taken less academic coursework and fewer honors courses than White SAT test-takers.
- The majority of African American undergraduate admissions test-takers are female, a precursor to the gender gap in postsecondary educational enrollments and degree completions.
- Educational aspirations increased between 1980 and 1990 for both African Americans and Whites. One-third of African American high school sophomores aspired to earn a bachelor's degree or higher in 1980, compared with two-thirds of African American high school sophomores in 1990.

- On-time high school completion rates were substantially lower for African Americans than for Whites among both 1980 (78.1% versus 86.8%) and 1990 (78.7% versus 90.5%) high school sophomores.
- African Americans experience greater unemployment than Whites. A higher percentage of African Americans than of Whites were unemployed during the year following their scheduled high school graduation among both 1980 and 1990 high school sophomores.
- The transition to postsecondary education is also more difficult for African Americans than for Whites. A smaller share of African Americans than of Whites enrolled in higher education in the fall following their scheduled high school graduation among both those who were high school sophomores in 1980 and 1990.
- African Americans attain lower levels of education than their White counterparts. Only 42.5% of African Americans, but 52.7% of Whites, had attained some educational credential beyond high school within ten years of their scheduled high school graduation.
- African American women tend to attain vocational or occupational certificates and licenses at higher rates than African American men, White women, and White men.
- African Americans are less likely than Whites to attain the levels of education to which they had once aspired. Only one-fourth (23.2%) of African Americans who had aspired as sixth graders to attend college had earned at least a bachelor's degree within ten years of their high school graduation, compared with one-half (47.8%) of Whites.
- Lower socioeconomic status appears to partly explain the lower educational attainment levels for African Americans.
- Annual earnings were comparable for African Americans and Whites who had attained associate's degrees, bachelor's degrees, and advanced degrees. But, African Americans who completed only a high school diploma had lower average earnings than their White counterparts.
- At 19.3%, African Americans are over-represented among the nation's armed services personnel relative to their representation in the U.S. population (12.6%).
- Although educational attainment levels of active duty military personnel have increased over the past fifteen years, more than three-fourths (80.7%) have earned only a high school diploma.
- The lower level of educational attainment for African American than for White military personnel likely limits the advancement of African Americans to the highest ranks.
- HBCUs play an important role in educating officers in America's armed services, particularly the army.

Testing data reported in this publication were obtained directly from the various testing companies, including the College Entrance Examination Board, the Educational Testing Service, and the American College Testing Program. Military data were gathered from the Defense Manpower Data Center. Other data and information presented in this publication were produced from original analyses of databases sponsored by the United States Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics. Some of the data are cross-sectional, meaning they provide a snapshot of individuals at one particular point in time, whereas others are longitudinal, tracking the same individuals over a period of time.

This volume presents a multi-dimensional picture of African Americans as they progress from school to college and from school to work and reveals a number of challenges to be confronted. This volume completes the three volume Data Book describing the educational status, progress, and achievement of African Americans at all levels of education from preschool through adulthood.

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENT PERFORMANCE ON UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS TESTS

African Americans are Underrepresented Among Undergraduate Admissions Test-Takers

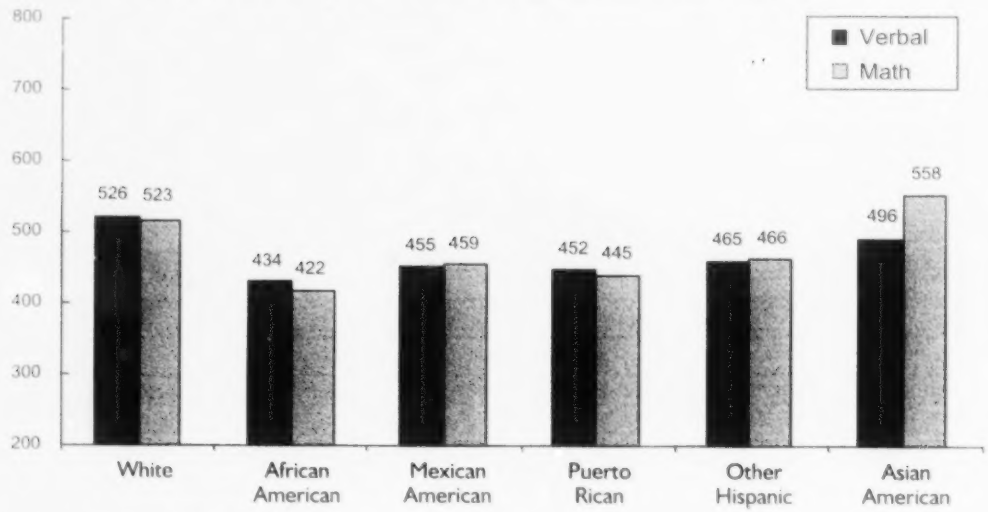
Increasing numbers of African Americans are taking the standardized assessments that measure preparation for college, such as the PSAT/NMSQT, the SAT, the ACT, and the Advanced Placement (AP) examinations. Because the rate of increase in the number of African American test-takers has been greater than the rate of increase for Whites, African Americans now represent a greater share of individuals taking each of these tests. Despite this progress, however, African Americans remain underrepresented among test-takers relative to their representation among the traditional college-age population (14.3%). African Americans now comprise 9.1% of PSAT/NMSQT examinees, 11% of SAT examinees, 11% of ACT examinees, and only 4.4% of AP examinees.

Test Scores for African Americans are Lower than for Whites

African Americans are not only underrepresented among test-takers, but they also score far below their White counterparts. **Figure 1** shows that average scores for African Americans are about 100 points lower than the average scores for Whites on both the Verbal and the Mathematics sections of the SAT. In 1995, African Americans averaged 17.1 on the ACT, compared with 21.5 for Whites. Only 32% of African Americans, but 71% of Whites, received passing scores on the English Language and Composition AP examination.

An examination of the background characteristics of SAT test-takers offers some possible explanations for the lower performance of African American students on these standardized tests. Compared with White SAT-takers, African Americans come from families with lower incomes and lower levels of parental edu-

Figure 1. Average SAT Verbal and Mathematics Scores: 1996



Source: The College Board, 1996

cational attainment. African American SAT-takers also have lower high school grade point averages, fewer years of academic coursework during high school, and fewer honors courses. Even after controlling for these differences, however, African Americans average lower SAT scores than their White counterparts (see **Figure 2**).

African American High School Students Interested in Attending HBCUs

African American high school students appear to be especially interested in attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Seven of the eight institutions receiving the highest numbers of SAT test score reports from African Americans in 1996 were HBCUs.

HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION RATES OF 1980 AND 1990 AFRICAN AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORES

Most African American High School Students Attend Public High Schools

Although some progress has been made between 1980 and 1990, African Americans continued to be underrepresented at Catholic and other private schools. A higher percentage of African American than of White sophomores attended public high schools in both 1980 (96.7% versus 89.5%) and 1990 (94.5% versus 89.9%).

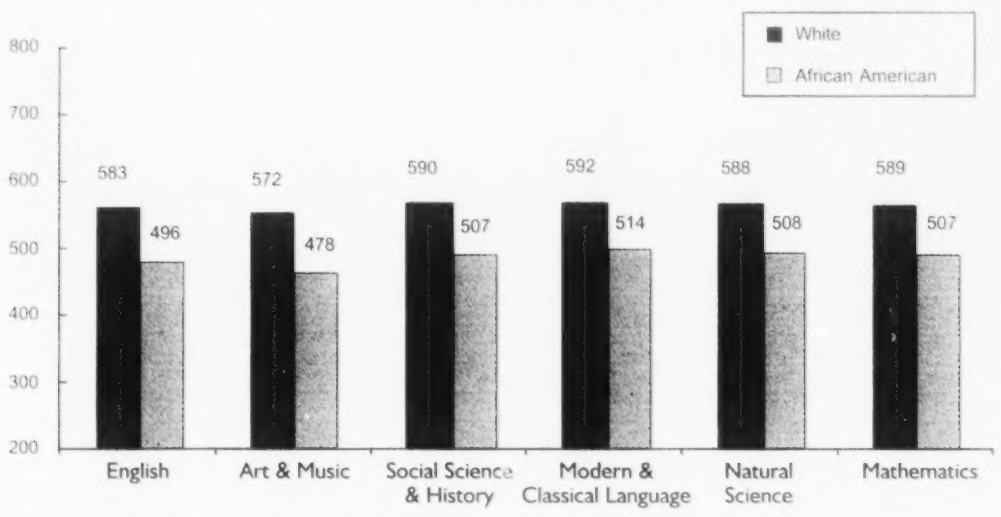
Socioeconomic Status of African Americans has Increased Between 1980 and 1990

In both 1980 and 1990, African American high school sophomores were concentrated in the lower two socioeconomic status (SES) quartiles. But, African Americans' status relative to Whites' status improved over this ten-year period. **Figure 3** shows that the percentage of African Americans in the lowest SES quartile fell from 48.1% in 1980 to 39.1% in 1990. African Americans continue to be underrepresented in the two upper SES quartiles.

Educational Aspirations Have Increased for African Americans and Whites

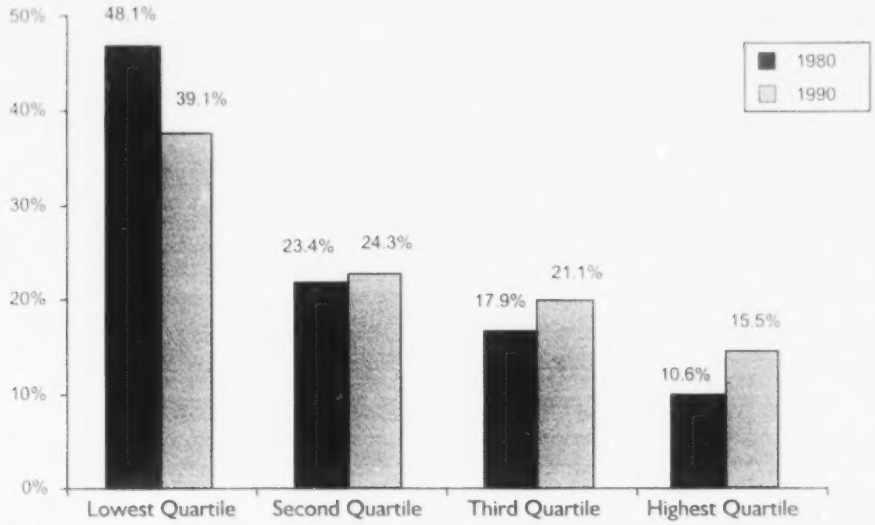
Educational aspirations rose between 1980 and 1990 among both African American and White high school sophomores. **Figure 4** shows that only one-third (35.2%) of African American and 40.6% of White 1980 high school sophomores aspired to complete a bachelor's degree

Figure 2. Average Verbal SAT Scores for Students who Took Honors Courses in Various Subjects: 1996



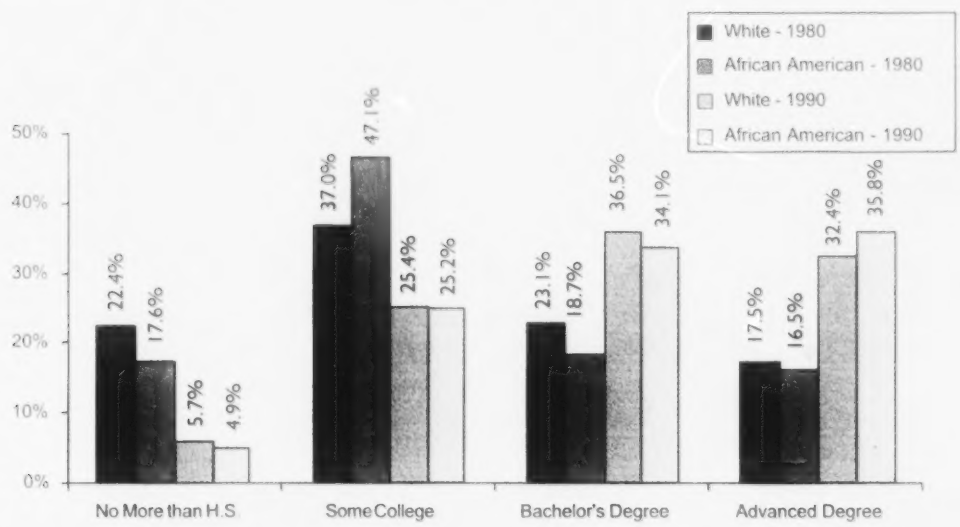
Source: SAT College-Bound Seniors Profiles, 1996

Figure 3. Socioeconomic Status of African American 1980 and 1990 High School Sophomores



Sources: High School & Beyond Survey of 1980 High School Sophomores and National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 Eighth Graders, First (1990) Follow-up

Figure 4. Educational Expectations of 1980 and 1990 High School Sophomores



Sources: High School and Beyond Survey of 1980 High School Sophomores, First (1982) Follow-up and National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 Eighth Graders, First (1990) and Second (1992) Follow-ups

or more. By comparison, more than two-thirds of African American (69.9%) and White (68.9%) 1990 high school sophomores expected to earn at least a bachelor's degree.

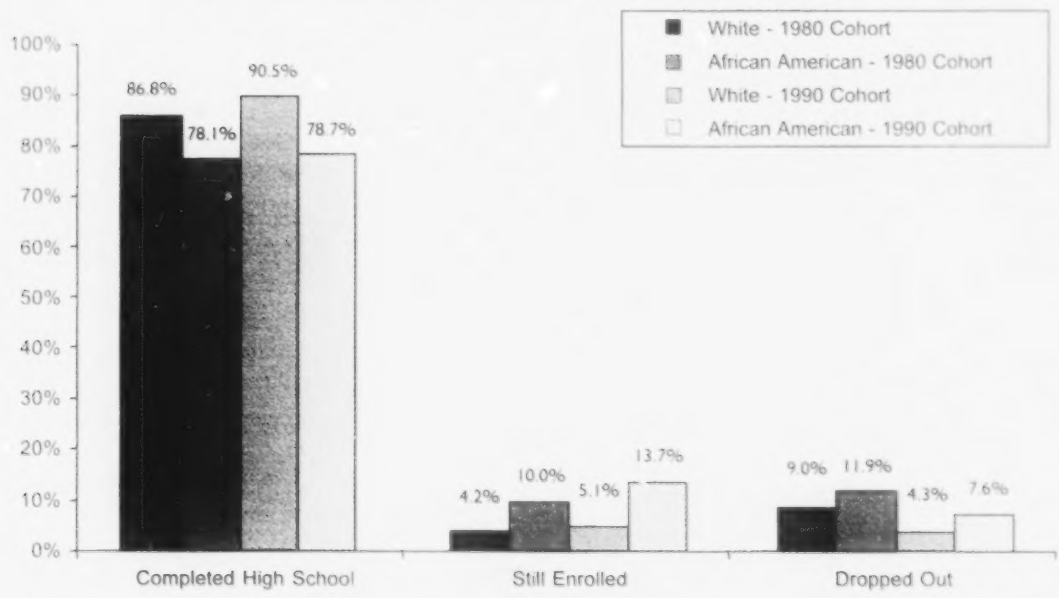
Over this same period, participation in academic curricular programs increased, likely reflecting the increase in educational aspirations. About 43.4% of 1980 high school sophomores were enrolled in academic curricular tracks, compared with 66.4% of 1990 high school sophomores. Nonetheless, a smaller percentage of African Americans than of Whites were enrolled in academic curricular programs among both the 1980 cohort (37.8% versus 45.5%) and the 1990 cohort (59.0% versus 68.5%).

High School Completion Rates are Lower for African Americans than for Whites

Overall, the proportion of high school sophomores who completed high school on schedule increased over the ten-year period from 84.8% for 1980 sophomores to 87.5% for 1990 sophomores. Nonetheless, **Figure 5** shows that on-time completion rates for African American high school sophomores remained unchanged at about 78%, substantially lower than the proportion of their White counterparts (86.8% for the 1980 cohort and 90.5% for the 1990 cohort). Even two years after their scheduled graduation, a smaller proportion of African Americans than of Whites had finished high school on-time among both the 1980 cohort (81.0% versus 86.8%) and the 1990 cohort (83.0% versus 90.1%).

African American men appear to have greater difficulty finishing high school on schedule than African American women. On-time completion rates were lower for African American men than for African American women among both 1980 sophomores (74.0% versus 81.8%) and 1990 sophomores (76.3% versus 81.0%).

Figure 5. High School Completion Status of 1980 and 1990 Sophomores in August Following Scheduled High School Graduation



Sources: High School and Beyond Survey of 1980 High School Sophomores, First (1982), Second (1984), Third (1986), and Fourth (1992) Follow-ups and National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 Eighth Graders, First (1990), Second (1992), and Third (1994) Follow-ups

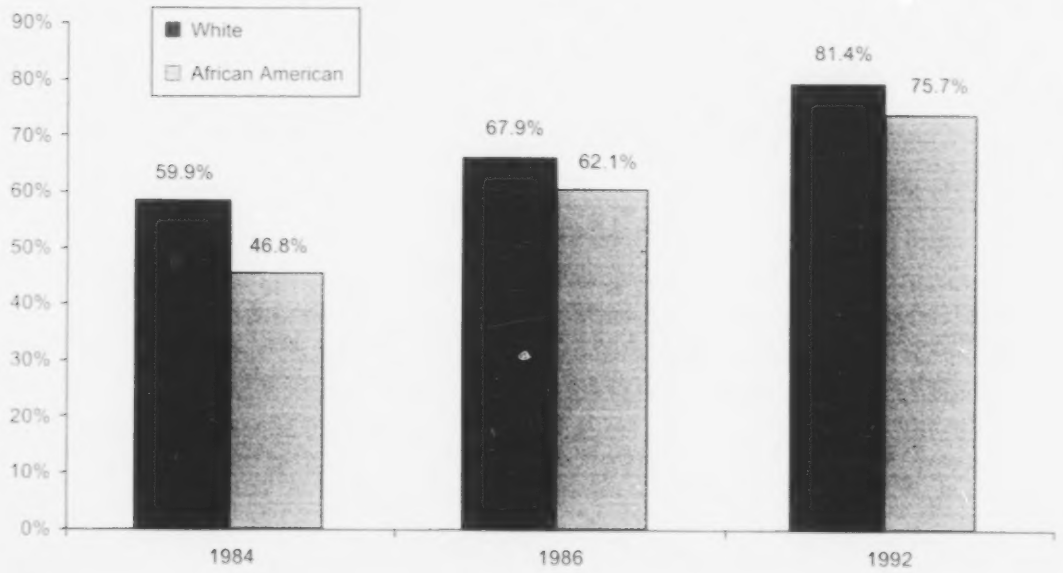
Even after considering other differences between African American and White high school sophomores, on-time completion rates are lower for African Americans than for their White peers. Among 1990 high school sophomores, a lower percentage of African Americans than of their White counterparts completed high school on schedule at urban, suburban, and rural high schools. On-time completion rates were also lower for African Americans than for Whites attending public high schools. Graduation rates were comparable for African Americans and Whites who were in academic curricular programs, but lower for African Americans than for Whites who were in vocational and other non-academic curricular programs. On-time graduation rates were comparable for African Americans and Whites with test scores in the lowest three test score quartiles, but lower for African Americans than for Whites with test scores in the highest test score quartile. For all but those in the 3rd socioeconomic status quartile, on-time high school graduation rates were lower for African Americans than for their White peers. African Americans whose parents had not completed high school, had some postsecondary education, and had advanced degrees all had lower rates of completing high school on-time than their White counterparts.

POSTSECONDARY ACTIVITIES OF 1980 AND 1990 AFRICAN AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORES

Unemployment Rates are Higher for African Americans than for Whites

Generally, the transition from high school to postsecondary education and employment was more difficult for African Americans than for Whites in both cohorts. Working for pay was the most common activity of 1980 high school sophomores in 1984, 1986, and 1992. But **Figure 6** shows that a smaller proportion of

Figure 6. Percentage of 1980 High School Sophomores who were Working for Pay During the First Week of February 1984, 1986, 1992



Sources: High School and Beyond Survey of 1980 High School Sophomores, First (1982), Second (1984), Third (1986), and Fourth (1992) Follow-ups and National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 Eighth Graders, First (1990), Second (1992), and Third (1994) Follow-ups

African Americans than of Whites were working for pay at all three points in time. Among both 1980 and 1990 high school sophomores, a higher share of African Americans than of Whites were unemployed or out of the work force in the year following their scheduled high school graduation. The higher rate of unemployment for African Americans than for Whites persisted two, four, and ten years after most 1980 high school sophomores had completed high school.

The barriers restricting African Americans' successful transition to the work force are unclear. Regardless of socioeconomic status, father's educational attainment, high school diploma status, high school curricular program, high school type, urbanicity, and the poverty level of the high school student body, a higher share of African American 1988 8th graders than of their White counterparts were unemployed (and not students) in 1993, the year after their scheduled high school graduation.

Participation in the Armed Services is Greater for African Americans than for Whites

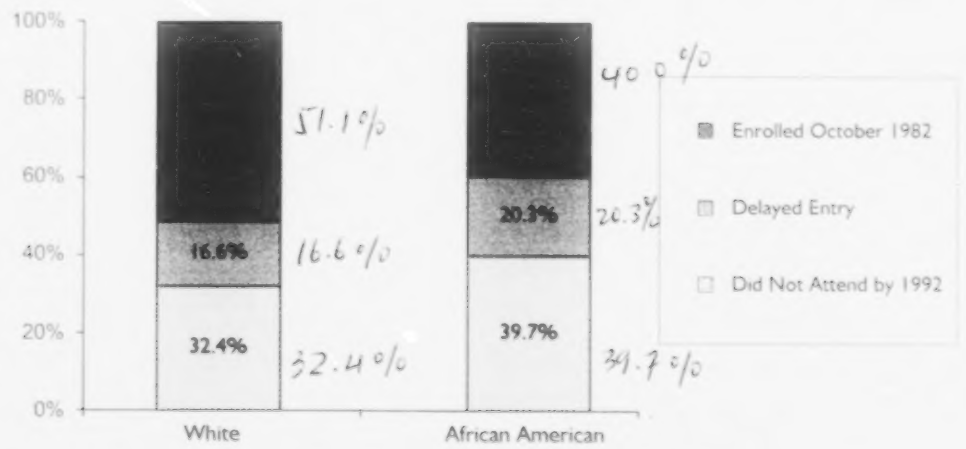
African American men were overrepresented among both 1980 and 1990 high school sophomores who entered the armed services. African American men represented only 5.9% of all 1980 high school sophomores, but 15.0% of those working in the military in 1984, 13.8% in 1986, and 16.9% in 1992. African American men comprised 6.7% of 1990 high school sophomores, but 11.3% of those who were engaged in military duty in 1992, 14.5% in 1993, and 15.8% in 1994.

College-Going Rates are Lower for African Americans than for Whites

Among 1988 8th graders, a smaller percentage of African Americans than of Whites had some postsecondary education by spring 1994, two years after their expected high school graduation (52.7% versus 66.0%). Only one-fourth (23.7%) of African Americans, but one-third (33.7%) of Whites, were working toward bachelor's degrees. Among African Americans, a smaller share of men than of women had enrolled in postsecondary education by 1994 (45.8% versus 59.7%). Just one-fourth (26.9%) of African Americans were traditional postsecondary education students in 1993, compared with 40.7% of Whites.

Figure 7 shows that only 40.0% of African American 1980 high school sophomores enrolled in postsecondary education directly

Figure 7. Time of Entry into Postsecondary Education Among 1980 High School Sophomores



Source: High School and Beyond Survey of 1980 High School Sophomores, First (1982), Second (1984), Third (1986) and Fourth (1992) Follow-ups

from high school, compared with 51.1% of their White counterparts. Less than two-thirds (60.3%) of African Americans, but 67.6% of Whites, enrolled in some type of postsecondary educational institutions within ten years of their expected high school graduation. A smaller percentage of African Americans than of Whites were taking undergraduate courses two years (25.9% versus 37.5%) and four years (18.7% versus 31.3%) after their scheduled high school graduation.

Educational Attainment is Lower for African Americans than for Whites

Figure 8 shows that ten years after their scheduled high school graduation, 57.5% of African Americans who were high school sophomores in 1980 had attained no educational credential beyond high school, compared with 47.3% of their White counterparts. Only 13.4% of African Americans, but 28.5% of Whites, had completed a bachelor's degree or higher.

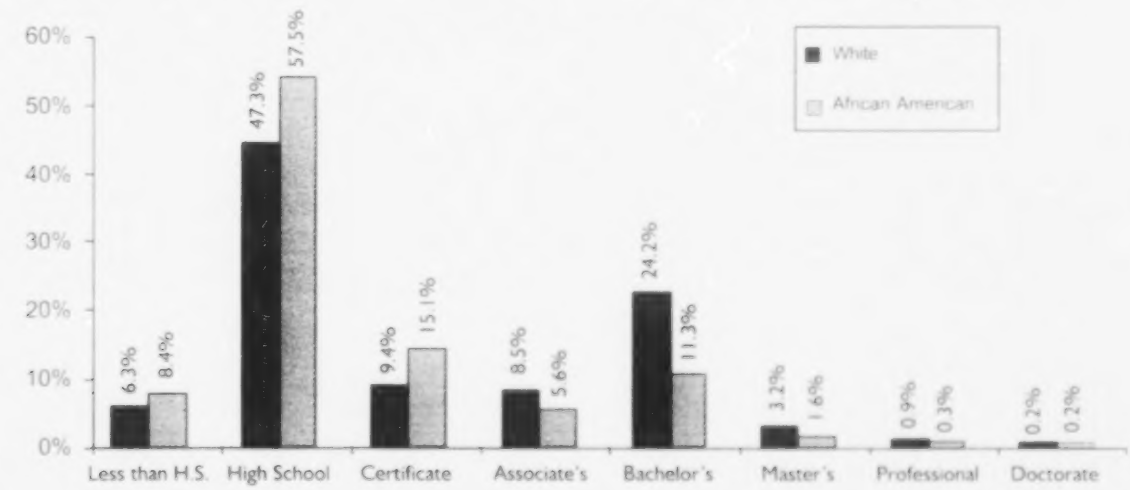
African American Women Tend to Attain Vocational Certificates or Licenses

African American women tended to attain certificates or licenses at higher rates than African American men, White women, and White men. Ten years after their scheduled high school graduation, postsecondary certificates or licenses were the highest educational credential held by 18.9% of African American women, but only 10.7% of African American men, 10.4% of White women, and 8.4% of White men.

College-Going Rates are Lower for African American men than for African American Women

African American men appeared to have greater difficulty than African American women with the transition to postsecondary education. Nearly one-half (46.6%) of African American men had no postsecondary education within ten years of their scheduled high school graduation, compared with only one-third (33.5%) of African American women. But, although a smaller number of African American men than of African American women entered postsecondary education immediately after high school, a higher percentage of these African American men than of these African American women had attained bachelor's degrees (30.5% versus 20.8%) or advanced degrees (7.0% versus 3.5%) by June 1992.

Figure 8. Highest Degree Attained Among 1980 High School Sophomores by June 1992



Source: High School and Beyond Survey of 1980 High School Sophomores, First (1982), Second (1984), Third (1986) and Fourth (1992) Follow-ups

Educational Attainment is Higher for Individuals who Enter Postsecondary Education Immediately from High School

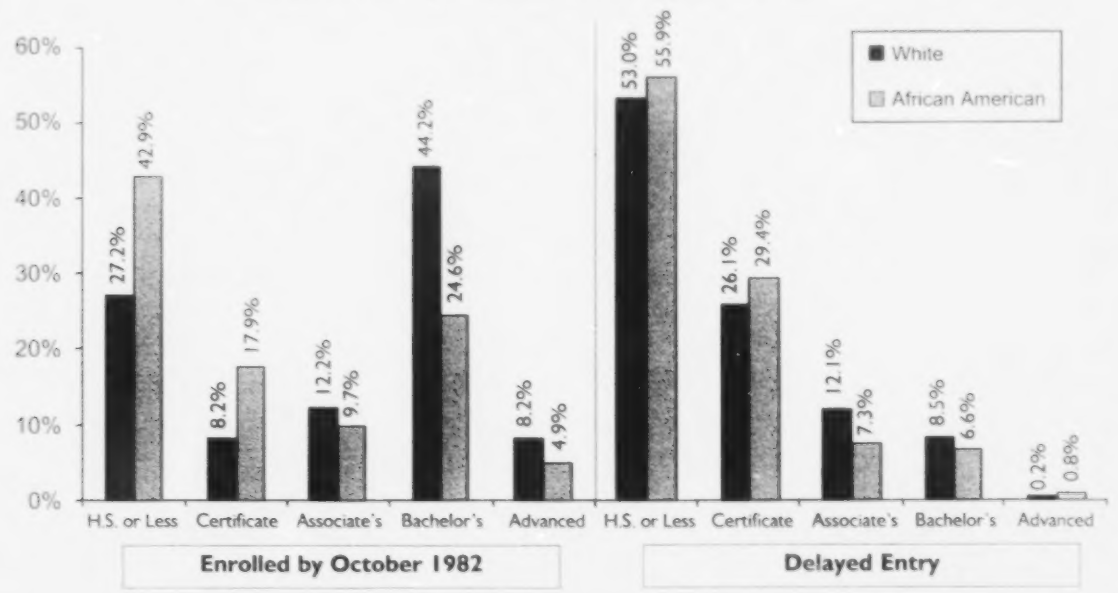
Those who entered postsecondary education immediately after high school graduation were more likely to complete some type of credential or degree than those who delayed their entry. **Figure 9** shows that a smaller percentage of African Americans than of Whites earned bachelor's degrees or more among those who entered postsecondary education immediately after high school (29.5% versus 52.4%). But similar percentages of African Americans and Whites who delayed entry completed at least a bachelor's degree (7.4% versus 8.7%). African Americans who delayed entry tended to enroll in private four-year colleges and universities for their bachelor's degrees at a higher rate than their White counterparts (29.4% versus 15.1%). Time to bachelor's degree completion was similar for African Americans and Whites who completed no more than a bachelor's degree.

Educational Aspirations are Related to Educational Attainment

Both students' own educational aspirations and their mother's aspirations for their education were positively related to students' actual educational attainment. About 59.5% of 1980 high school sophomores who had aspired as 6th graders to attend college had actually completed some credential beyond high school by 1992, compared with only 33.6% of those who did not aspire as 6th graders to attend college. **Figure 10** shows that the proportion of African Americans who had aspired to attend college and who had earned at least a bachelor's degree ten years after their scheduled high school graduation was one-half as large as the proportion of Whites (23.2% versus 47.8%). Educational attainment levels were also lower for African American men than for African American women regardless of 6th grade educational aspirations.

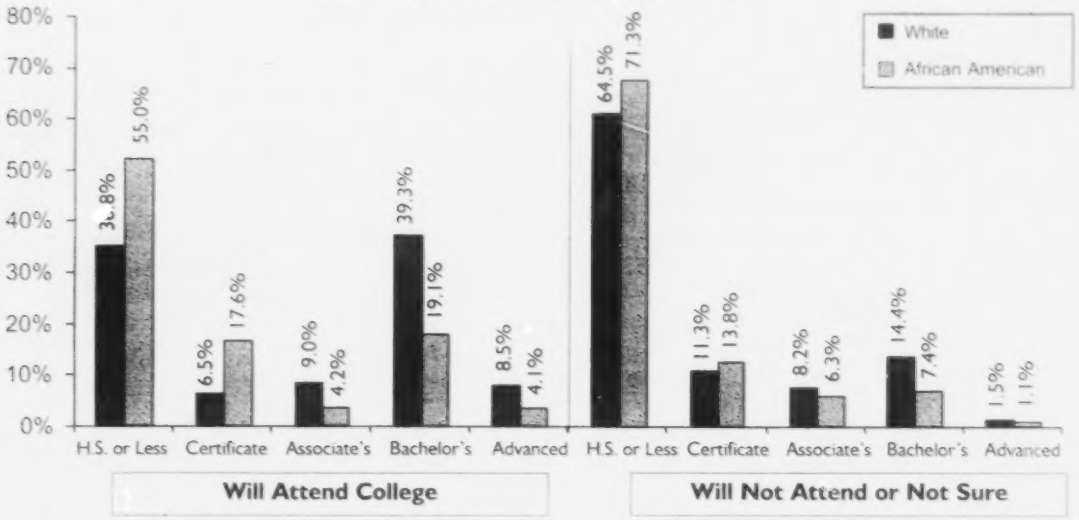
Mother's educational aspirations also appeared to be positively related to degree

Figure 9. Highest Degree Attained by June 1992 Among 1980 High School Sophomores by Time of Entry into Postsecondary Education



Source: High School and Beyond Survey of High School Sophomores, First (1982), Second (1984), Third (1986) and Fourth (1992) Follow-ups

Figure 10. Highest Degree Attained by June 1992 Among 1980 High School Sophomores by Sixth Grade Education Aspirations



Source: High School and Beyond Survey of High School Sophomores, First (1982), Second (1984), Third (1986) and Fourth (1992) Follow-ups

attainment. About 60.2% of 1980 high school sophomores whose mothers expected them to attend college had completed some educational credential beyond high school compared with only 15.8% of those whose mothers expected them to be employed full-time. Nonetheless, educational attainment levels were lower for African Americans whose mothers aspired for them to attend college than for their White counterparts. A higher percentage of African American women than of African American men had attained certificates by June 1992 among those whose mothers expected them to attend either college (17.5% versus 11.4%) or trade school (33.9% versus 9.9%).

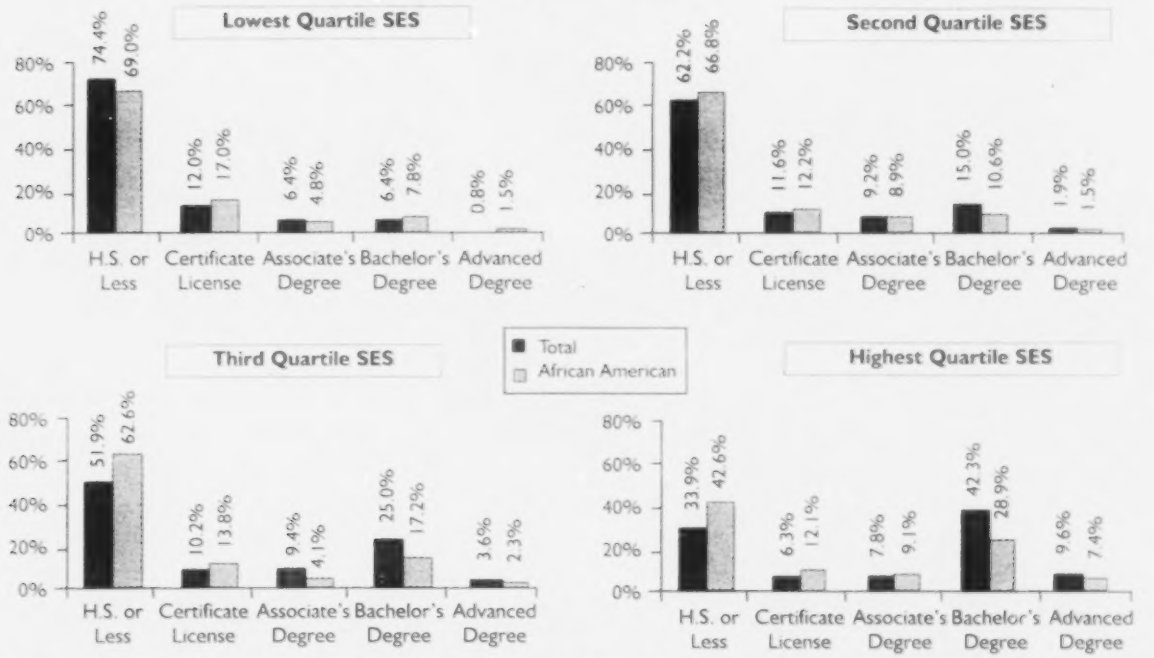
Educational attainment levels were similar for African Americans and Whites in vocational and other curricular tracks. But a smaller percentage of African Americans than of Whites in the academic track had completed at least a bachelor's degree by 1992 (23.8% versus 51.9%). A higher share of African Americans than of Whites had earned some credential beyond high school among those in the lowest test score quartile (26.6% versus 19.6%) and the 2nd test score quartile (43.4% versus 33.1%). Similar proportions of African Americans and Whites earned some credential beyond high school among those in the 3rd (51.6% versus 48.4%) and the highest (68.5% versus 70.4%) test score quartiles.

Lower Socioeconomic Status may Account for Some of the Differences in Educational Attainment

African Americans' attenuated levels of educational attainment may be attributable, in part, to their lower socioeconomic status (SES). **Figure 11** shows that the percentage of African Americans who earned at least a bachelor's degree by June 1992 increased from 9.3% of those in the lowest SES quartile to 36.3% of those in the highest quartile. Educational attainment was higher for African Americans than for Whites with the lowest SES, but lower for African Americans than for Whites in the 3rd and highest quartiles of SES.

When only 1980 high school sophomores in the lowest SES quartile are considered, a smaller proportion of African Americans than of

Figure 11. Highest Degree Attained by June 1992 Among 1980 High School Sophomores by Socioeconomic Status



Source: High School and Beyond Survey of 1980 High School Sophomores, First (1982), Second (1984), Third (1986) and Fourth (1992) Follow-ups

Whites in academic curricular programs (15.0% versus 22.2%) had earned at least a bachelor's degree by 1992. But a higher percentage of African Americans than of whites with the lowest SES and test scores in the lower three test score quartiles had completed a bachelor's degree or higher by 1992.

Earnings are Lower for African Americans than for Whites who Complete only High School

The effects of African Americans' lower levels of educational attainment are evidenced most clearly by their lower earnings, their higher unemployment, and their lower rates of home ownership although other factors, such as discrimination, may contribute to these problems. African Americans who were high school sophomores in 1980 and who completed only a high school diploma by 1992 had lower earnings than their White counterparts ($7,881 versus $11,429). Similarly, African Americans who attained only a high school diploma or a certificate were unemployed for more months than Whites. Annual earnings and amounts of unemployment were comparable for African Americans and Whites who attained associate's degrees, bachelor's degrees, and advanced degrees. Among 1990 high school sophomores who were employed two years after their scheduled high school graduation, African Americans had 10.7% lower earnings than Whites.

African American women reported lower salaries than African American men among 1980 high school sophomores who attained only a high school diploma, those who attained certificates, and those who attained advanced degrees.

A smaller percentage of African Americans than of Whites who were high school sophomores in 1980 owned their homes four years (14.8% versus 17.8%) and ten years (23.1% versus 45.1%) after their expected high school graduation. Controlling for educational attainment largely eliminates the observed gap in monthly mortgage payments for African Americans and Whites.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE MILITARY

African Americans are Overrepresented Among the Nation's Military Personnel

In 1996 nearly 300,000 of the nation's 1.5 million active duty military personnel were African American (19.3%). African Americans are overrepresented among the nation's active duty military personnel relative to their representation in the U.S. population (12.6%). In 1996 African Americans represented 27.0% of active duty personnel in the army, 17.0% in the navy, 15.7% in the marines, 14.7% in the air force, and 6.7% in the coast guard. Although the total number of active duty personnel has fallen by 29% over the past decade, African Americans have consistently represented about 20% of the total since 1981.

Men outnumber women among active duty military personnel regardless of racial/ethnic group. **Figure 12** shows that, in 1996, African American women comprised 4.0% of all armed services personnel whereas African American men comprised 15.4%. Over the past fifteen years, African American women have increased their representation from 2.2% to 4.0%, whereas African American men have decreased their representation from 17.6% to 15.4%.

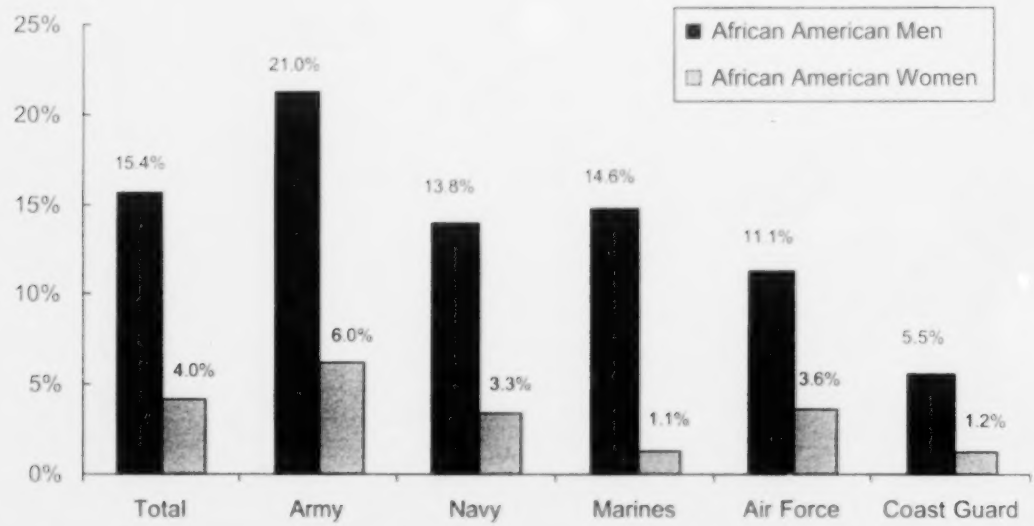
African Americans Hold Lower Rank than Whites

African American active duty military personnel are concentrated in the lower ranks. In 1996 a smaller share of African Americans than of Whites were junior officers (3.6% versus 11.6%) and senior officers (1.9% versus 7.2%). African American women tended to hold lower ranks than African American men, White women, and White men. Only 6.5% of African American women were junior or senior officers, compared with 21.0% of White women, 17.7% of White men, and 5.2% of African American men.

Educational Attainment Levels are Lower for African Americans than for Whites

Regardless of racial/ethnic group, educational attainment levels among active duty military personnel have increased over the past fifteen years. Nonetheless, high school continued to be the highest level of education completed by an overwhelming majority of active duty mil-

Figure 12. Representation of African Americans Among Active Duty Military Personnel: 1996



Source: Defense Manpower Data Center (1996)

itary personnel in 1996 (80.7%). Throughout this period, educational attainment levels were lower, on average, for African Americans than for Whites. **Figure 13** shows that the percentage of African Americans with at least a bachelor's degree rose from 4.5% in 1981 to 8.0% in 1996. But the percentage of Whites who had attained a bachelor's degree or higher rose from 16.5% in 1981 to 20.1% in 1996.

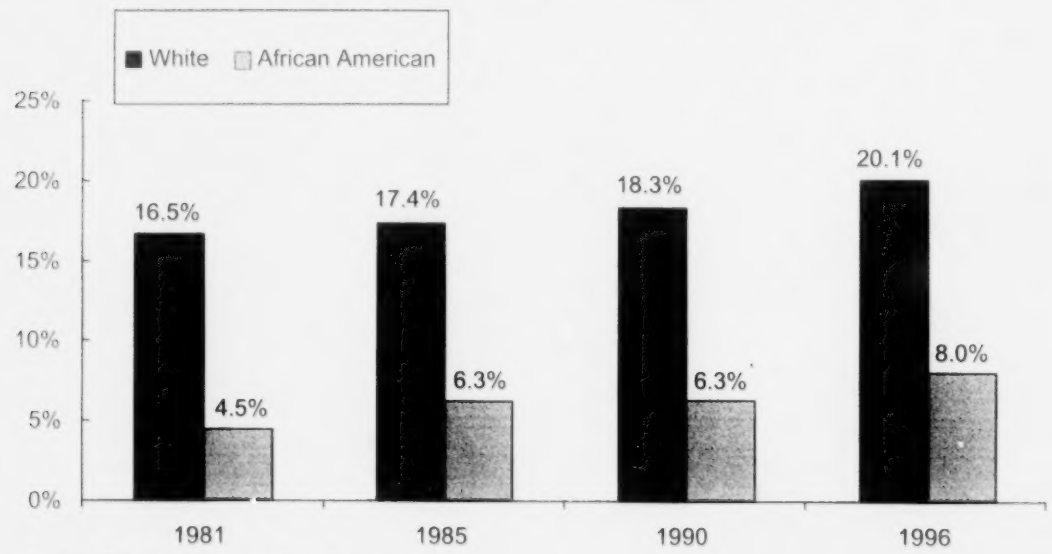
Educational attainment levels are lower for African Americans than for Whites even after considering age differences. For example, a smaller percentage of African Americans than of Whites had earned advanced degrees among those between the ages of 25 and 29 (0.5% versus 2.6%), 30 and 39 (3.1% versus 11.3%), 40 and 49 (12.1% versus 37.2%), and 50 and 59 (38.5% versus 64.3%).

The lower level of education completed by African Americans appears to limit their ability to attain higher ranks. Controlling for rank largely explains the lower observed educational attainment levels for African Americans than for Whites. In 1996 high school was the highest level of education completed by similar percentages of African American and White privates and corporals (97.2% versus 96.5%), sergeants and staff sergeants (95.8% versus 94.6%), sergeants first class and sergeant majors (90.1% versus 87.7%), and warrant officers (58.2% versus 54.9%). The bachelor's degree was the highest degree attained by 73.6% of African American and 72.7% of White junior officers. The rates of master's degree attainment were similar for African Americans and Whites who were senior officers (67.9% versus 70.4%) and admirals and generals (95.0% versus 81.9%).

Historically Black Colleges and Universities Educate African American Officers

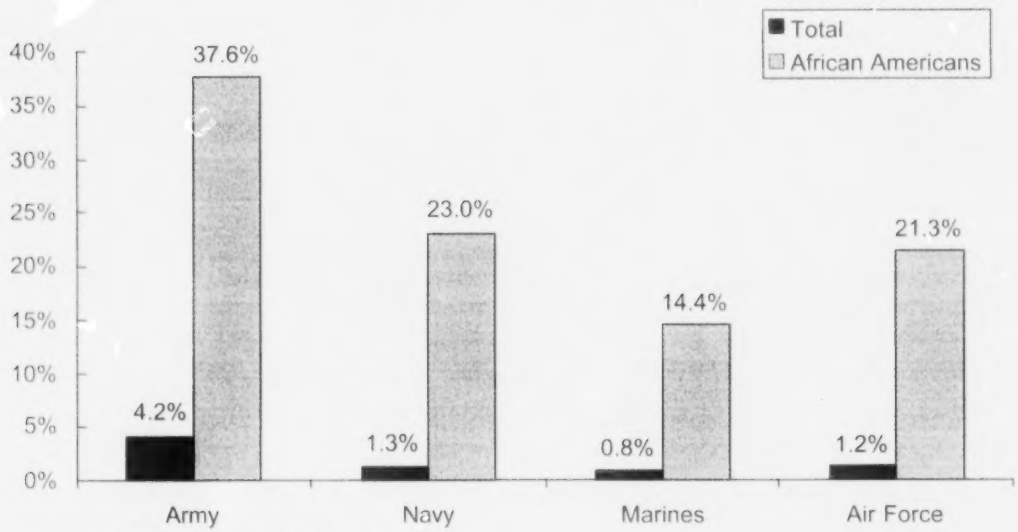
Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) play an important role in educating officers in America's armed services. About 4.2% of all officers in the army, 1.3% of all officers in the navy, 1.2% of all officers in the air force, and 0.8% of all officers in the marines were graduates of HBCUs. **Figure 14** shows that more than one-third (37.6%) of African American officers in the army and more than one-fifth of African American officers in the navy (23.0%) and the air force (21.3%) appear to have graduated from HBCUs.

Figure 13. Trends in the Percentage of Active Duty Military Personnel With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher: Selected Years from 1981 to 1996



Source: Defense Manpower Data Center

Figure 14. Percentage of Officers who Graduated from HBCUs: 1996



Source: Defense Manpower Data Center

CONCLUSION

This compilation of data about the transitions from school to college and school to work may serve various purposes for the overall general audience of readers and perhaps different purposes for various groups of readers. For all readers, this Data Book provides the first comprehensive description of the transitions from school to college and school to work in a single document. These data should lead readers to raise questions about additional data that are needed at the national, state, and institutional levels in order to develop a more complete understanding of the challenges that confront African Americans.

The data and information in this Data Book also provide a baseline of facts that are necessary for taking appropriate action. For example, high school counselors may focus their efforts upon raising the representation of African Americans among PSAT, SAT, and ACT test-takers and high school principals and teachers may focus upon raising the preparation of African Americans for these tests. Higher education leaders and policymakers may use the data describing college-going rates to identify methods for increasing access for African Americans.

Researchers may use the data and information in this Data Book to identify gaps in the current knowledge base. Some of the questions pertain to the data that are not available, such as the factors that influence students' decisions to delay their entry into higher education from high school, the extent to which perceived insufficient financial resources limit students' access to higher education, and the reasons African Americans tend to favor employment in the armed services. Numerous other issues that are included in this volume merit further probing by educational researchers. Among the questions of greatest importance to researchers at the Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute are the following:

UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS TEST-TAKING

- What actions can be taken to increase the representation of African Americans

among the nation's PSAT, ACT, SAT, and AP test takers?

- What new policies and procedures are needed to ensure that African American students receive the academic preparation that is necessary to raise their admissions test scores?
- What strategies are needed to increase the availability of Advanced Placement (AP) courses in high schools attended by African Americans and to raise the representation of African Americans among AP test-takers in different subject areas?

HIGH SCHOOL COMPLETION

- What strategies are needed to raise the on-time high school completion rates of African Americans?

TRANSITION TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

- What policies and practices are needed to facilitate the transition for African Americans, particularly African American men, directly from high school to college?
- What accounts for the tendency of African American women to pursue vocational and occupational training?
- What improvements are needed to raise educational attainment levels for African Americans, enabling African Americans to achieve higher economic and occupational status?
- What strategies are needed to ensure that African Americans are able to achieve the levels of education to which they aspire?

TRANSITION TO EMPLOYMENT

- What actions are needed to facilitate the transition from high school to employment for African Americans, thereby reducing the number of African Americans who are unemployed and out of the work force after leaving high school?

MILITARY SERVICE

- What accounts for the overrepresentation of African American men in the armed services?
- What strategies are needed to raise the levels of education attained by African Americans who serve in the military, thereby enabling them to achieve higher ranks?
- What lessons can be learned from the success that HBCUs are having in producing officers in the army?

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